

# SAFETY ALERT

*A Publication of the Division of Labor Relations, Office of Safety and Staff Development*

**ISSUE DATE:** July, 2012

**INCIDENT TYPE:** Hidden Hazards

**TYPE OF WORK ACTIVITY:** Inspection (Dept. of Water Resources)

**THE INCIDENT:** The following details were provided by the Department of Water Resources of an incident experienced by their field staff:

While performing routine maintenance (disking a firebreak) of a levee in Butte County, two tires went flat on the tractor. Upon inspection of the tires, the employee noticed a spiked device sticking out of the tire. He made a careful inspection of the area and located eight more of the devices stuck into the ground in tall grass.



**CONCLUSIONS:** The devices were not visible because of the overgrowth of grass in the area. The spikes on these devices could easily go through a boot, shoe, or foot, if stepped on. At the time, it was not known who placed the devices there or for what purpose.



**Safety Alert  
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**PAGE 2 OF 2**

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

1. Employees should be vigilant around overgrown areas that might contain “hidden” hazards like these spikes, other sharp objects, or holes in the ground that could result in a fall.
2. Pre-planning is essential. Review the required task(s) and location to identify any potential hazards that might be present in that specific area.
3. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the work being performed and location.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

**Caltrans Safety Manual, Chapter 12, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Section 12.13 Foot Protection** states:

At a minimum, appropriate footwear for employees working in the field is defined as; “A serviceable leather work shoe or boot with soles made of neolite, neoprene, crepe rubber, or similar material that will not disintegrate or be affected by petroleum solutions and will retain a non-slip surface under wet, damp, oily, or muddy conditions.”

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